Speaking Notes

For

The Honourable Bill Blair

President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness

Ministerial Presser: Blockades

Thursday, February 17, 2022

[APG]

Minister Mendicino to introduce Minister Blair

- Thank you, Minister Mendicino, Deputy Prime Minister.
- Good morning, everyone.
- Bon matin tout le monde.
- Thank you for joining us this morning.
- Currently, all of our ports of entry with the United States are open.
- Trade, goods, and *people* are moving freely again.
- Travelers and commercial vehicles are getting where they need to go, unimpeded by unlawful blockades.
- I would like to thank our law enforcement partners for safely and successfully clearing these vital passages in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario over the past number of days.
- While we breathe this sigh of relief, we know that these blockades could easily reappear. And we saw evidence of this yesterday in Windsor.

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- I’d like to thank the local police for their swift action in intercepting and preventing another illegal blockade from fracturing this critical economic artery.

- The removal of these blockades has restored the strength of our economy. They’ve ensured the safe and free passage of goods between Canada and the United States.

- And most importantly - they’ve made sure that Canadians are able to get back to work and get their lives back to normal.

- In Ottawa, we’re continuing to see progress made by the Ottawa Police Service, the Ontario Provincial Police, and the RCMP, as they work to end the occupation of Wellington Street and downtown Ottawa.

- Yesterday, Interim Chief Bell stated that officers have been going from truck to truck to advise individuals that they are participating in an illegal demonstration and making it clear that if they do not leave, they will face serious consequences.

- Interim Chief Bell also confirmed that he is confident that the OPS and the Integrated Command Unit have the appropriate resources, and a concrete plan.

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- He emphasized that this operation will not be considered complete until the streets are cleared, and peace and order are fully restored in the City of Ottawa.

- To the individuals continuing to participate in this occupation - it is time to go home - *now*.

- To those who have children with them - take them home - *immediately*.

- The OPS has engaged a planning team with the Children's Aid Society to encourage anyone with children in the area to leave and bring their children to a place of safety.

- To the people of Ottawa - we will continue to work with municipal and provincial partners to make sure this occupation ends safely and swiftly, so you can get your city back.

- The decision to invoke the Emergencies Act, was one we took with great caution and care, and even some regret. But we knew that it was necessary to give law enforcement the tools, authorities, and resources they require to do their job.

- We will not hesitate to do whatever it takes to protect our ports of entry, and to protect Canadian interests from the criminal intent of the people behind these blockades.

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- I want to assure the residents of Ottawa, and indeed all Canadians, that this will end - and participants, and their supporters - wherever they may be - will be held to account for their actions.

- Thank you very much.

- Merci beaucoup.

Moderator will begin the media Q&A

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